1. **Hidden enemies: Afghanistan combats landmines**

[](http://www.dw.de/hidden-enemies-afghanistan-combats-landmines/a-16716914)There are landmines hidden in nearly all of Afghanistan's provinces. Playing children are especially at risk of detonating the landmines, which have already cost thousands of lives in the country.

The 13-year-old Firoz Ali Alizada was in the wrong place at the wrong time when he decided to take a short cut on the way to school with a few friends. He stepped on a landmine that instantly went off and had to be rushed to hospital. Doctors said they would have to amputate his legs if there was any chance for him to survive. But before doctors would even see him, his parents had to bribe them with a lot of money. In the end, the operation was carried out and young Firoz lost his legs.

He was one of very few who survive such blasts. "I was lucky. It is a miracle that I survived despite losing my legs and nearly all of my blood."

Each month, between 30 and 60 Afghans have an encounter with landmines. They are either killed or badly injured. "Compared to the 1990s, that number has gone down, but it is still the highest rate in the world," Alizada explains.

**Children most at risk**

According to Fischer, there are around 5,000 areas in Afghanistan that are considered risk zones for mines. And the people who live there could fall victim to them at any time.

Handicap International has been working with victims of landmines in Afghanistan since the end of the 1980s. The organization offers them support and rehabilitation programs. It also promotes child awareness programs.

According to figures provided by the United Nations it is predominantly children who are at risk to landmines. Over 50 percent of the victims are girls and boys under the age of 18. Most of them end up handicapped for the rest of their lives. between 50 and 60 percent of all physical handicaps can be traced back to mines," according to Mohammad al-Din Qani from the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled. The Afghan government offers a retirement pension of between $5 and $10 per month. But that is not enough to feed a family.